

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA
EASTERN DIVISION
No. 4:23-CV-193-D

RODNEY D. PIERCE and
MOSES MATTHEWS,

Plaintiffs,

v.

THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE
BOARD OF ELECTIONS, et al.,

Defendants.

ORDER

On January 13, 2025, the parties filed a joint motion to suspend Local Civil Rule 83.1(k), Standing Order 5-PLR-7, Standing Order 22-SO-2-M, and request an exception to judicial practice preferences regarding cellphones in the courtroom [D.E. 97]. The court denies the joint motion.

Nobody needs a cellphone in the courtroom. In the court's experience, cellphones in courtrooms cause delay, disruption, and hinder the efficient administration of justice. Unless otherwise exempt, Standing Order 5-PLR-7 prohibits the parties' witnesses and staff from bringing any wireless electronic devices into the Terry Sanford Federal Building. Counsel shall inform their witnesses and staff of this prohibition.

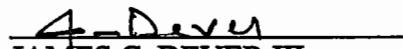
As for attorneys, Local Civil Rule 83.1(k) states that attorneys are "required to present a bar card to the court security officer to retain a cellular phone, smartphone, laptop, tablet, or other electronic device." Id. If a party requires wireless electronic devices for evidence preparation or other similar purposes, those devices must be brought into the courthouse by an attorney with a valid bar card. A bar card from any United States jurisdiction will suffice. The court, however, is aware that some jurisdictions do not provide physical bar cards. Any attorneys barred in

jurisdictions that do not provide physical bar cards may use similar proof of barred status, such as an official document acknowledging bar admission from their home jurisdiction. To the extent the parties plan to have staff operate wireless devices necessary to present evidence or perform similar duties during trial, an attorney complying with Local Civil Rule 83.1(k) may bring those devices into the courthouse. Moreover, the parties must comply with Local Civil Rule 83.10(b). To the extent the parties are concerned about being admitted to the Terry Sanford Federal Building, the court's security officers are dedicated professionals who will admit those who comply with the local civil rules, standing orders, and this order.

The court advises counsel that there are three rooms on the seventh floor of the Terry Sanford Federal Building where counsel may prepare witnesses and leave their belongings, including cellphones, while the trial is ongoing. Court staff will direct the parties to these rooms on the day of the pretrial conference.

In sum, the court DENIES the parties' joint motion [D.E. 97]. The court SHALL hold the pretrial conference in courtroom one at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 30, 2025.

SO ORDERED. This 16 day of January, 2025.



JAMES C. DEVER III
United States District Judge